

# The Exit Of the Editor

## Ben Bradlee Toasted on Last Day as Post News Chief

8/1/91  
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In a gesture of blind gratitude, loyalty, affection and sadness, hundreds of Washington Post staffers turned up at work yesterday dressed like Ben Bradlee—in striped shirts with white collars—to honor his last day as executive editor.

Reporters stood on desk tops. Editors crowded the outskirts of his glass office. Applause rose up. Parading irreverence and goodwill, Bradlee's longtime friends and colleagues remembered him—and roasted him—at a celebration in the afternoon, just a few hours before deadline.

"I've been reading all these stories," said columnist Richard Cohen, "about the *kind* Ben Bradlee, the *good* Ben Bradlee, the *dashing* Ben Bradlee. But I came to The Washington Post in 1968 when he was known as *The Terminator*. . . . Every week, reporters would disappear and you'd never know what happened to them."

They made fun of his clothes. Apparently they weren't always so fabulous. They remarked upon his use of language. Much of this wasn't printable. They laughed about his short attention span, his gruff demeanor and Yankee prudery. How he'd yelled at them. How he'd ignored them.

But they mostly remembered his wit, his encouragement, his grit. Editors Karen DeYoung and Larry Meyer admitted their failed attempts—year in, year out—at trying to impress him. Ombudsman Richard Harwood remembered Bradlee's uninhibited, sometimes outrageous behavior. Harwood first laid eyes on him at a Newsweek cocktail party—and Bradlee was standing on his head. Reporter Tom Lippman told how Bradlee's secretary learned to spell expletives properly while typing his cor-



Bradlee laughing at an anecdote at farewell party.

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